

## ***ECOSYSTEM PROTECTION***

### **What ecological resources should be evaluated in an ecological risk assessment?**

**Generic Assessment Endpoints for Ecological Risk Assessments.** Suter, G.W., II\*, Gardner, T; Rodier, DJ; Schwenk, S; Troyer, M E; Tyler, PL; Urban, DJ; Wellman, MC; Wharton, S; White, J; U.S. EPA.

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#### **Description:**

Ecological risk assessment is a process for evaluating the likelihood that adverse ecological effects may occur or are occurring as a result of exposure to one or more stressors. A critical early step in conducting an ecological risk assessment is deciding which aspects of the environment will be selected for evaluation. This step is often challenging because of the remarkable diversity of species, ecological communities, and ecological functions from which to choose and because of statutory ambiguity regarding what is to be protected. This exhibit describes a new Risk Assessment Forum publication which builds on existing EPA guidance and experience to assist those who are involved in ecological risk assessments in carrying out this step, which in the parlance of ecological risk assessment is termed “selecting assessment endpoints. This guidance document describes a set of endpoints, known as generic ecological assessment endpoints (GEAEs), that can be considered and adapted for specific ecological risk assessments. The GEAEs are not exhaustive or mandatory, but are provided to assist EPA scientists and risk management decisions, as well as, ecological risk assessors outside the Agency.